

REMARKS

INTRODUCTION:

In accordance with the foregoing, claims 1-4 have been amended. No new matter is being presented, and approval and entry are respectfully requested.

Claims 1-11 are pending and under consideration. Reconsideration is respectfully requested.

REJECTION UNDER 35 U.S.C. §102:

In the Office Action, at page 2, numbered paragraph 2, claims 1-4 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by Kudou et al. (USPN 5,173,626; hereafter, Kudou). This rejection is traversed and reconsideration is requested.

Claim 1 has been amended for clarity to recite: "A latch circuit comprising: four or more inverters connected consecutively, one after another, with a single loop node connecting each pair of adjacent inverters to hold a signal such that four inverters are in series in a single loop; and a plurality of different input terminals directly connected respectively to different loop nodes, wherein at least one input terminal is used for normal operation of the latch circuit, and at least another different input terminal is used for a test operation of the latch circuit." Claims 2-4 have been amended correspondingly.

It is respectfully submitted that, as shown in FIGs. 4 and 5 of Kudou, Kudou recites a pair of inverters 28 and 30 and an inverter 27 disposed in front of the inverters 28 and 30 to serve as a gate, wherein, in contrast to the present claimed invention of claims 1-4, four or more inverters are not connected consecutively, one after another, with a single loop node connecting each pair of adjacent inverters to hold a signal such that four inverters are in series in a single loop; and a plurality of different input terminals are not directly connected respectively to different loop nodes, wherein at least one input terminal is used for normal operation of the latch circuit, and at least another different input terminal is used for a test operation of the latch circuit. Such a configuration allows the present invention to realize a high-speed input operation of the first input.

Thus, it is respectfully submitted that amended claims 1-4 are not anticipated under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) by Kudou et al. (USPN 5,173,626).

ALLOWABLE SUBJECT MATTER:

Claims 5-11 were allowed.

CONCLUSION:

In accordance with the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that all outstanding objections and rejections have been overcome and/or rendered moot, and further, that all pending claims patentably distinguish over the prior art. Thus, there being no further outstanding objections or rejections, the application is submitted as being in condition for allowance which action is earnestly solicited.

If the Examiner has any remaining issues to be addressed, it is believed that prosecution can be expedited by the Examiner contacting the undersigned attorney for a telephone interview to discuss resolution of such issues.

If there are any underpayments or overpayments of fees associated with the filing of this Amendment, please charge and/or credit the same to our Deposit Account No. 19-3935.

Respectfully submitted,

STAAS & HALSEY LLP

Date: July 12, 2005

By: Darleen J. Stockley
Darleen J. Stockley
Registration No. 34,257

1201 New York Avenue, N.W.
Suite 700
Washington, D.C. 20005
Telephone: (202) 434-1500
Facsimile: (202) 434-1501